

Draft 10-29-14

Citizen Identified Unroaded Areas

This environmental assessment incorporates by reference (as per 40 CFR 1502.21) the Citizen Identified Unroaded Areas specialist report and other technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusions of this environmental assessment. The entire report is in the project record which is located at the Sisters Ranger District in Sisters, Oregon.

In the early 2000s Oregon Wild, an Oregon state environmental interest group, conducted their own unroaded area inventory across Oregon, including the Deschutes National Forest, using inventory criteria they developed for their own purposes. A map of Oregon Wild's unroaded areas was provided in response to the scoping letter for the proposed action for the Melvin Butte Vegetation Management Project in March 2014. The majority of lands included in the Oregon Wild unroaded inventory overlap with Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA).

Effects of the Action Alternatives on Citizen Identified Unroaded Areas

Issue: The action alternatives have the potential to effect areas identified as unroaded in the Oregon Wild unroaded forest inventory.

Measure: the number of acres of unroaded forest inventory affected by project activities in each of the action alternatives.

Alternative 1 – No Action

There would be no management actions implemented in the Oregon Wild unroaded areas under the No Action alternative. Biological and ecosystem functions would continue in the project area. Areas could be affected by fire management activities in the event of a wildfire.

Actions and Effects Common to All Action Alternatives

Silviculture and Associated Activities

The action alternatives would silviculturally treat stands and use prescribed fire to maintain and restore fire climax ponderosa, provide stand diversity in plantations, and manage in-growth of trees. Alternative 2 would treat about 4,469 acres and includes management of dwarf mistletoe in ponderosa pine stands. Alternative 2 would require about 0.80 miles of temporary road to facilitate stand treatments. Alternative 3 would treat about 4,405 acres; no temporary roads would be built under Alternative 3. Each action alternative would administratively close about 6 miles of roads and decommission about 8 miles of road. See Chapter 2 of the environmental assessment for a more complete discussion of the action alternatives.

Alternatives 2 (proposed action) and Alternative 3

Direct and Indirect Effects

There action alternatives would impact about 46 acres of the Oregon Wild Unroaded Area inventory (Table 2). The Oregon Wild roadless inventory that would be affected does not include any Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA). No temporary roads would be built in the Oregon Wild unroaded inventory areas.

Harvest units in the inventory that would be affected include units 4, 31, 40, 48, and 56. Unit 4 would be Burn Only. The other units would be thinned from below depending on the harvest prescription. Table 1 describes harvest units by acres.

Table *: Oregon Wild Unroaded Inventory Affected by Stand Level Prescriptions

Unit Number	Silviculture Prescription	Acres
4	Prescribed Fire (Burn Only)	26.12
31	Thinning	2.36
40	Scenic Views Enhancement	1.80
48	Scenic Views Enhancement	7.87
56	Mixed Conifer Treatment	7.86

Table *: Oregon Wild Unroaded Areas that Overlap Alternative 2 and Alternative 3

Alternatives 2 and 3	Total Acres
	46

There may be indirect effects to the Oregon Wild Unroaded inventory that is outside the project area as a result of the action alternatives because of the dust and noise that are usually associated with ground-based logging systems. These indirect effects would be limited in duration and intensity and would not affect the integrity of the Oregon Wild Unroaded inventory.

Figure 1 shows the relationship of the Oregon Wild Unroaded Areas to the action alternatives.

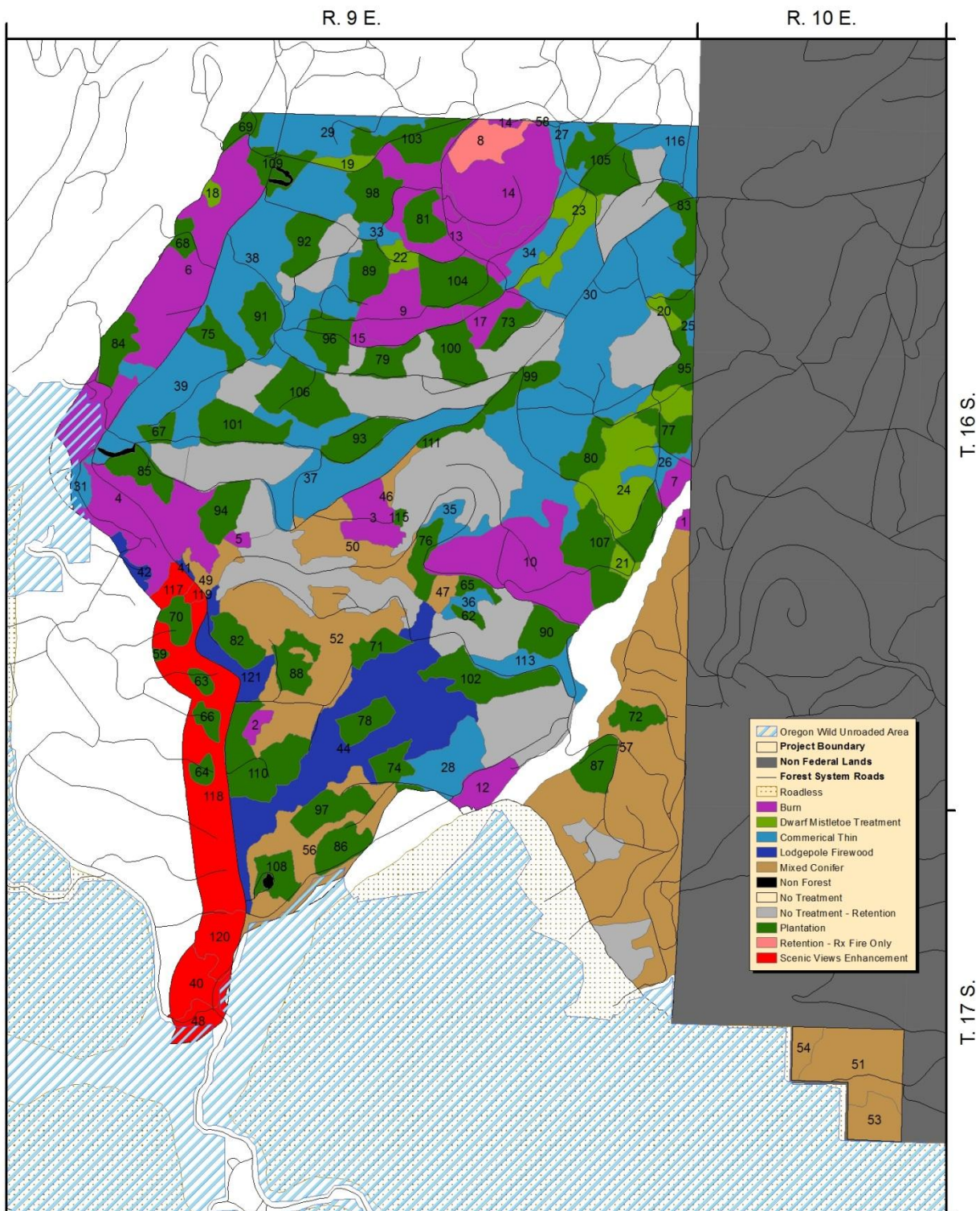


Figure 1: Oregon Wild Unroaded Inventory and Impacts of the Action Alternatives

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects area is the Melvin Butte Vegetation Management Project and 2012 Pole Creek fire areas and the time frame is the past ten years and the next ten years. Future foreseeable management activities that could occur over the next ten years include maintenance underburning of previously thinned areas and thinning of small diameter trees and associated pile burning in stands located in the Wildland Urban Interface. Areas that were thinned from below for the Melvin project would most likely see their next entry for thinning at year 15 or 25. Stands that are located in the Oregon Wild Unroaded Inventory would continue to receive treatment over the long term and would be recorded in the district silviculture database. Fire suppression activities may also occur in the Oregon Wild unroaded inventory.

Past actions that have affected the Oregon Wild inventory include the 2012 Pole Creek fire. The fire burned through the unroaded inventory at various intensities. The 2012 Pole Creek Fire Timber Salvage project did not harvest stands in the Oregon Wild inventory.

The proposed action, combined with cumulative effects, is not considered a significant effect on the Oregon Wild roadless inventory.

Conclusion

The action alternatives would impact about 46 acres of the Oregon Wild Unroaded inventory as a result of the Melvin Butte Vegetation Management Project.